

INVESTIGATIVE ACTIVITY REPORT


Case Title: Straw Donor

Case Number: 18-0015-I

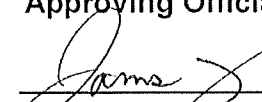
Subject of Report: Mario Ferro Plea Agreement

Activity Date: January 4, 2019

Reporting Official:

 1/4/2019
Carlos Baixauli, SA - Date

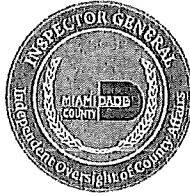
Approving Official:

 1/4/2019
James Mazer, SSA - Date

DETAILS:

On January 4, 2019, Mario C. Ferro surrendered to the court and entered into a plea agreement with the State Attorney's Office regarding his involvement in case M19-249. Mr. Ferro plead guilty, adjudication withheld, to two counts of Campaign Contributions in the Name of Another a first degree misdemeanor F.S.S. 106.08(5). Mr. Ferro paid full investigative costs in the amount of \$7,788 to the Miami Dade County-Office of the Inspector General, \$2,500 to the Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office, and a \$10,000 donation to the Denise Moon Fund. Mr. Ferro will also complete two years of reporting probation.

Mr. Ferro provided the OIG with check #9474 in the amount of \$7,788. Copies of the check have been uploaded to the case file.



INVESTIGATIVE ACTIVITY REPORT

Case Title:


Case Number: 17-0019-I

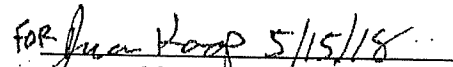
Subject of Report: Witness Interviews

Activity Date: May 10, 2018

Reporting Official:

Approving Official:


Carlos Baixauli, SA - Date


James Mazer, SSA - Date

DETAILS:

On May 10, 2018, Special Agents from the Miami-Dade County Office of the Inspector General and Investigators from the Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office Public Corruption Unit, interviewed five suspected straw donors to the Joe Martinez for Commissioner Campaign of 2016. All of the interviews were sworn and recorded and have been uploaded to the case file. The official recordings have also been provided to the Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office for official transcription.



INVESTIGATIVE ACTIVITY REPORT

Case Title:

Case Number: 17-0019-I

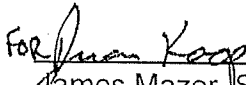
Subject of Report: Regions Bank Docs Received

Activity Date: April 25, 2018

Reporting Official:

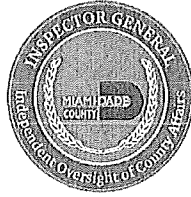
Approving Official:

 5/15/18
Carlos Baixauli, SA - Date

For  5/15/18
James Mazer, SSA - Date

DETAILS:

On April 25, 2018, Miami-Dade County Office of the Inspector General Special Agent Carlos A. Baixauli Jr., received two disks from Investigator Mike D'Ambrosia of the Miami-Dade State Attorneys Office, containing bank documents pursuant to subpoena request to Regions Bank for records pertaining to Grisel C. Suri. The disks have been reviewed and uploaded to the case file.



INVESTIGATIVE ACTIVITY REPORT

Case Title:

Case Number: 17-0019-I

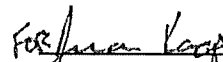
Subject of Report: BankUnited Docs Received

Activity Date: March 30, 2018

Reporting Official:

Approving Official:

 5/15/18
Carlos Baixauli, SA - Date

 5/15/18
James Mazer, SSA - Date

DETAILS:

On March 30, 2018, Miami-Dade County Office of the Inspector General Special Agent Carlos A. Baixauli Jr., served a subpoena on BankUnited for documents pertaining to the accounts of Eduardo and Olga Leal. The documents were produced and certified by BankUnited representatives immediately and have been reviewed and uploaded to the case file.



INVESTIGATIVE ACTIVITY REPORT

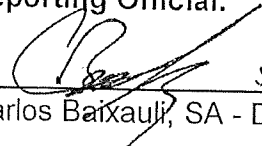
Case Title:

Case Number: 17-0019-I

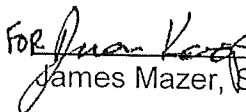
Subject of Report: TotalBank Docs Received

Activity Date: April 17, 2018

Reporting Official:

 5/15/18
Carlos Baixauli, SA - Date

Approving Official:

FOR  5/15/18
James Mazer, SSA - Date

DETAILS:

On April 17, 2018, Miami-Dade County Office of the Inspector General Special Agent Carlos A. Baixauli Jr., received an email from Investigator Mike D'Ambrosia of the Miami-Dade State Attorneys Office, containing bank documents pursuant to subpoena request to TotalBank for records pertaining to the account of Orlando Sanchez. The records have been reviewed and uploaded to the case file.



INVESTIGATIVE ACTIVITY REPORT

Case Title:

Case Number: 17-0019-I

Subject of Report: City National Bank Docs Received Activity Date: April 9, 2018

Reporting Official:

Approving Official:

CB 5/15/18
Carlos Baixauli, SA - Date

James Mazer 5/15/18
James Mazer, SSA - Date

DETAILS:

On April 9, 2018, Miami-Dade County Office of the Inspector General Special Agent Carlos A. Baixauli Jr., received one disk from Investigator Mike D'Ambrosia of the Miami-Dade State Attorneys Office, containing bank documents pursuant to subpoena request to City National Bank for records pertaining to the Campaign Account of Commissioner Jose A. Martinez. The disk has been reviewed and uploaded to the case file.



REPORT OF INVESTIGATION RESULTING IN ARREST

Case Title: Straw Donor - Ferro

Case Number: 18-0015-I

Subject: Mario C. Ferro, Sr.

PREDICATE

An analysis of campaign contributions reported in a 2016 campaign treasurer's report for a candidate for County Commissioner for District 11 conducted pursuant to a separate OIG investigation¹, revealed suspicious contributions, specifically, five \$1,000 checks made payable to the "Joe A. Martinez Miami-Dade County Commissioner District 11 Campaign Acct." All five checks were dated July 19 or 20, 2016, were all made by individuals who lived outside of the commission district, and who did not appear to have the financial means to make such a contribution. It was suspected that unknown person(s) had conspired with these individuals to reimburse them for their contributions, in violation of Florida law.

A preliminary inquiry found that all five contributors had a nexus to Chico's Restaurant located at 4070 W 12th Ave Hialeah, FL, 33012 within the Westside Shopping Center. This shopping center is owned by Mario C. Ferro, Sr. and his son, Mario Ferro, Jr. The Ferro's are involved in commercial and residential real estate and own multiple real estate and development corporations in Miami-Dade County, including Ferro Development Corporation, LLC, and Ferro Investment Group, LLC. Part of their landholdings include 42 acres of undeveloped property located in District 11. For several years, the Ferros have tried unsuccessfully to have this property rezoned by the Board of County Commissioners.

ALLEGATIONS

The allegations were that the identified donors were reimbursed from an unknown person(s) in exchange for a personal check from the donor to the campaign, thus generating additional funds for the campaign through a straw donation. The maximum campaign contribution for an individual or business is \$1,000. The OIG criminal investigation verified that all five donors received \$1,000 in cash from Mario C. Ferro, Sr., who in turn requested from each straw donor that a personal check be issued to the subject campaign account.

¹ Case Number 17-0019-I

Based on the allegations the possible violations of law were:

106.08(7)(b) – Campaign Contributions in the Name of Another, 3rd Degree Felony

106.08(5)(a) – Campaign Contributions in the Name of Another, 1st Degree Misdemeanor

EVIDENCE SUPPORTING PROBABLE CAUSE

This investigation was conducted in accordance with the *Quality Standards for Investigations* found within the *Principles and Standards for Offices of Inspector General* as promulgated by the Association of Inspectors General.

The OIG, in conjunction with the Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office Public Corruption Task Force (SAO) took sworn statements and reviewed documents and financial records. The criminal investigation revealed that all five straw donors received \$1,000 in cash from Mario C. Ferro, Sr., in exchange for a check from their personal account made payable to "Joe A. Martinez Miami-Dade County Commissioner District 11 Campaign Acct." All five of the straw donors had a connection to Chico's Restaurant as either employees or customers and advised that they were approached by Mr. Ferro while in the establishment.

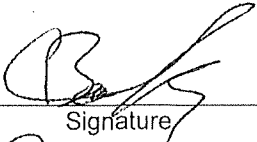
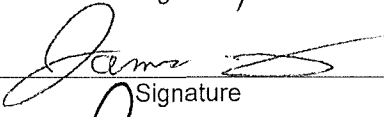
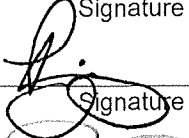

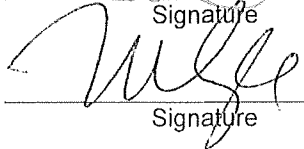
FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The criminal investigation proved that Mario C. Ferro, Sr., fraudulently obtained check donations from the five straw donors after providing them with \$1,000 in cash. Bank financial records reviewed showed that the straw donors deposited the cash into their personal checking accounts at their respective financial institutions and then issued a check to the "Joe A. Martinez Miami-Dade County Commissioner District 11 Campaign Acct" on the same day as the original cash deposit or within 48 hours of the cash deposit. All five straw donors stated that they provided the checks to Ferro, Sr. at Chico's Restaurant. Mr. Ferro is the owner of the shopping center where the Chico's is located and frequents the establishment on an almost daily basis.

On January 4, 2019, Mario C. Ferro, Sr., pled guilty to two misdemeanor counts of Campaign Contributions in the Name of Another F.S.S 106.08(5), and was sentenced to two years of reporting probation. At the plea hearing, Mr. Ferro, Sr. provided a check for costs of investigation to the OIG in the amount of \$7,788 and to the SAO in the amount of \$2,500. He also provided a donation by check of \$10,000 to the Denise Moon Victims of Crime Assistance Fund. Last, he is prohibited from making political contributions during the probationary period.

Attached and incorporated herein is a copy of the information charging document, and copies of the payments made by Mario C. Ferro Sr. Also attached is a completed AIG Quality Standards for Investigations Attestation Form.

REPORT SIGNATURES:

Carlos A. Baixauli Jr. Special Agent	 Signature	1/16/2019 Date
James Mazer Supervisor	 Signature	1/16/2019 Date
Felix Jimenez Deputy Inspector General	 Signature	1/16/19 Date
Patra Liu General Counsel	 Signature	1/17/2019 Date
Mary T. Cagle Inspector General	 Signature	1/24/19 Date



AIG QUALITY STANDARDS FOR INVESTIGATIONS ATTESTATION

In accordance with CFA Standard 4.07, as adopted in Section 4-10 of the Manual of OIG Policies and Procedures, this attestation will be completed upon the finalization of each investigative report as described in Section 4-10. By signing below, special agents and supervisors attest that that investigation was conducted in accordance with the Quality Standards for Investigations by Offices of Inspectors General as promulgated by the Association of Inspectors General.

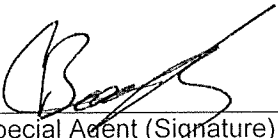
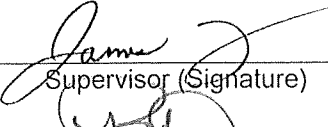

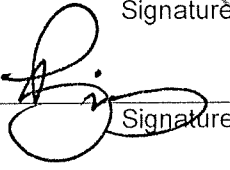
The signatures of OIG legal counsel and the Assistant Inspector General or Inspector General attest that evidence, in conjunction with the investigative report or memoranda, has been reviewed to ensure that the evidence used to support the conclusions meets the standards required of CFA Standard 4.04, as adopted in Section 4-9 of the Manual of OIG Policies and Procedures.

OIG Case #	18-0015-I
Case Name/ Description:	Straw Donor

Type of Investigative Report Prepared:

- ☐ OIG Final Report of Investigation [Section 4-10(A)(1)]
- ☐ Other OIG Report or Significant Memorandum [Section 4-10(A)(2)]
- ☒ OIG Report of Investigation Resulting in Arrest [Section 4-10(A)(3)]
- ☐ Administrative Case Closure Report [Section 4-10(A)(4)]

APPROVED AND ACCEPTED:

Carlos Baixauli Special Agent (Print)	 Special Agent (Signature)	1/15/19 Date
James Mazer Supervisor (Print)	 Supervisor (Signature)	1/15/19 Date
Patricia Liu OIG Legal Review (Print)	 Signature	1/17/2019 Date
Felix Jimenez Deputy IG or Inspector General (Print)	 Signature	1/15/19 Date

File

IN THE COUNTY COURT IN AND FOR MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA

THE STATE OF FLORIDA v.

INFORMATION FOR

MARIO CERBELLON FERRO

1. CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS IN THE NAME
OF ANOTHER 106.08(5) MISD 1D
2. CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS IN THE NAME
OF ANOTHER 106.08(5) MISD 1D

Defendant(s)

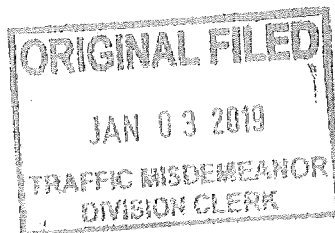
IN THE NAME AND BY AUTHORITY OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA:

TIM VANDERGIESEN, Assistant State Attorney of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit, on the authority of
KATHERINE FERNANDEZ RUNDLE, State Attorney, prosecuting for the State of Florida, in the County of
Miami-Dade, under oath, information makes that:

LR|1/3/19

CIN 000000; W/M, DOB: 9/25/30

DEFENDANT TO SURRENDER IN COURT ON FRIDAY JANUARY 4, 2019



Count 1

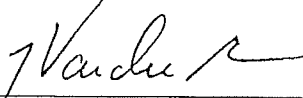
MARIO CERBELLON FERRO on or BETWEEN JULY 16, 2016 THROUGH JULY 27, 2016, in the County and State aforesaid, did knowingly and willfully make contributions in support of candidate(s) for election through or in the name of others, directly or indirectly, in an election for public office in the State of Florida, in violation of s. 106.08(5) Florida Statutes, contrary to the form of the Statute in such cases made and provided, and against the peace and dignity of the State of Florida.

Count 2

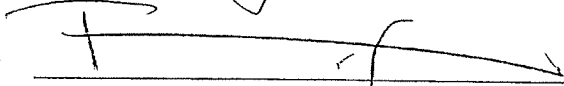
And the aforesaid Assistant State Attorney, under oath, further information make that MARIO CERBELLON FERRO on or BETWEEN JULY 16, 2016 THROUGH JULY 27, 2016, in the County and State aforesaid, did knowingly and willfully make contributions in support of candidate(s) for election through or in the name of others, directly or indirectly, in an election for public office in the State of Florida, in violation of s. 106.08(5) Florida Statutes, contrary to the form of the Statute in such cases made and provided, and against the peace and dignity of the State of Florida.

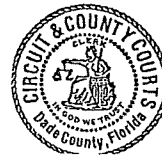
STATE OF FLORIDA, COUNTY OF MIAMI-DADE:

Personally known to me and appeared before me, the Assistant State Attorney of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida whose signature appears below, being first duly sworn, says that this prosecution is instituted in good faith.


Assistant State Attorney
Florida Bar # 891410
1350 NW 12th Avenue, Miami, FL (305) 547-0100

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 3rd day of January, 2019.

By 
Deputy Clerk for the Clerk of the Courts
Notary Public



WARRANT TYPE: NO CAPIAS
AWPS#: 19000006
COURT CASE NUMBER:

CASE TYPE: MISDEMEANOR
REFILE INDICATOR:
DIVISION:

TO ALL AND SINGULAR SHERIFFS OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA, GREETINGS:
YOU ARE HEREBY COMMANDED TO IMMEDIATELY ARREST THE DEFENDANT AND BRING HIM OR
HER BEFORE ME, A JUDGE IN THE 11TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA, TO BE DEALT
WITH ACCORDING TO LAW:

DEFENDANT'S NAME: FERRO MARIO CERBELLON
LAST FIRST MIDDLE TTL

AKA(S):
STR/APT/CITY/ST/ZIP: 9451 JOURNEYS END RD / / CORAL GABLES / FL/ 331562200
DOB: 09/25/1930 RACE: W SEX: M HEIGHT: 507 WEIGHT: 145 HAIR: GRY EYES:
SOC SEC #: XXX-XX-XXXX CIN #: SID #: FBI #:
SCARS, MARKS, TATTOOS: IDS #: 3259317
DRIVERS LICENSE #: STATE: FL
VEH TAG #: EIPJ89 STATE: FL MAKE: BMW MODEL: YEAR: 6 COLOR: BLACK
COMMENTS: DEFENDANT TO SURRENDER IN COURT ON FRIDAY JANUARY 4, 2019

PROBATION:

BEFORE ME PERSONALLY CAME NOT, ASSIGNED (AFFIANT) WHO, BEING DULY
SWORN, STATES THAT THE DEFENDANT ** FERRO, MARIO CERBELLON **, DID COMMIT THE
ACTS STATED IN THE ATTACHED STATEMENT OF FACTS. BASED UPON THIS SWORN STATEMENT
OF FACTS, I FIND PROBABLE CAUSE THAT ** FERRO, MARIO CERBELLON ** DID COMMIT
THE CRIME(S) OF:
IN DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, CONTRARY TO FLORIDA STATUTES AND AGAINST THE PEACE AND
DIGNITY OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA.
POLICE CASE #: AGENCY: STATE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
ASSISTANT STATE ATTORNEY: VANDERGIESEN, TIM UNIT: 064

EXTRADITE INFORMATION

EXTRADITION CODE: D - MISDEMEANOR - NO EXTRADITION
EXTRADITION MAY BE CONFIRMED WITH THE METRO-DADE POLICE DEPARTMENT, DADE COUNTY
** IN ANY EVENT, DEFENDANT WILL BE ARRESTED IF FOUND IN THE STATE OF FLORIDA **

SWORN TO BY AFFIANT NOT, ASSIGNED COURT ID 056- 9999
SO ORDERED THIS ____ DAY OF _____, _____.

BOND AMOUNT

JUDGE IN THE 11TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR DADE COUNTY FLA
() FIRST APPEARANCE JUDGE MAY NOT MODIFY CONDITION OF RELEASE _____
(RULE 3.131(D)(1)(D))

(X) TO ANSWER UNTO THE STATE OF FLORIDA ON AN INFORMATION OR INDICTMENT
FILED AGAINST HIM OR HER BY THE STATE ATTORNEY FOR THE CHARGE(S) OF:
() UPON ORDER OF A JUDGE IN THE ELEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA FOR
FAILURE TO APPEAR IN COURT TO ANSWER THE PENDING CHARGE(S) FOR THE
CHARGE(S) OF:

M 1 106.08(5) CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS/NAME OF ANOTHER
M 1 106.08(5) CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS/NAME OF ANOTHER

HARVEY RUVIN, CLERK OF THE COURT

BY _____
DEPUTY CLERK DATE

- ☐ IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE ELEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA.
☐ IN THE COUNTY COURT IN AND FOR MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA.

DIVISION

- ☐ CRIMINAL
☐ TRAFFIC/MISDEMEANOR
☐ OTHER

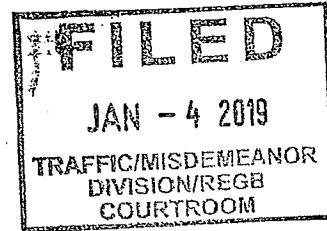
ORDER

CASE NUMBER

M19-246

THE STATE OF FLORIDA VS. *Mario Cerbellon*
Ferro

CLOCK IN



PLAINTIFF

DEFENDANT

THIS CAUSE having come on before the Court and the Court having been fully advised in the premises, it is thereupon

CONSIDERED, ORDERED AND ADJUDGED THAT *cost recovery 7788 Miami Dade OIG*
be paid to: 2500 Miami Dade SAG
charitable contribution 10000 Denise Moon Fund
entered in the above styled cause is hereby

☒ **GRANTED**

☐ **DENIED**

all monies paid at entry of plea

JAN - 4 2019

DONE AND ORDERED at Miami-Dade County, Florida, this _____ day of _____, 20____.

JUDGE

Christine Bandin
County Court Judge

MARIO FERRO SR
ELENA FERRO
9451 JOURNEYS END ROAD
CORAL GABLES, FL 33156

9474

84-7041/2652

DATE Jan 4, 2019

CHECK ARMOR
MADE IN U.S.A.

PAY TO THE ORDER OF Miami Dade County OIG \$ 7,788.00

Seven thousand seven hundred eighty eight + 00/100 DOLLARS

Photo
Safe
Deposit
Details on back

IBERIABANK

FOR Inspector General

Mario Ferro MP

⑈009474⑈

MARIO FERRO SR
ELENA FERRO
9451 JOURNEYS END ROAD
CORAL GABLES, FL 33156

9475

84-7041/2652

DATE Jan 4, 2019

CHECK ARMOR
MADE IN U.S.A.

PAY TO THE ORDER OF Miami Dade State Attorney \$ 2,500.00

Two thousand Five hundred + 00/100 DOLLARS

Photo
Safe
Deposit
Details on back

IBERIABANK

FOR _____

Mario Ferro MP

⑈009475⑈

MARIO FERRO SR
ELENA FERRO
9451 JOURNEYS END ROAD
CORAL GABLES, FL 33156

9476

84-7041/2652

DATE Jan 4, 2019

CHECK ARMOR
MADE IN U.S.A.

PAY TO THE ORDER OF Denise Moon Fund \$ 10,000.00

Ten thousand + 00/100 DOLLARS

Photo
Safe
Deposit
Details on back

IBERIABANK

FOR Charity contribution

Mario Ferro MP

⑈009476⑈